VISIT…

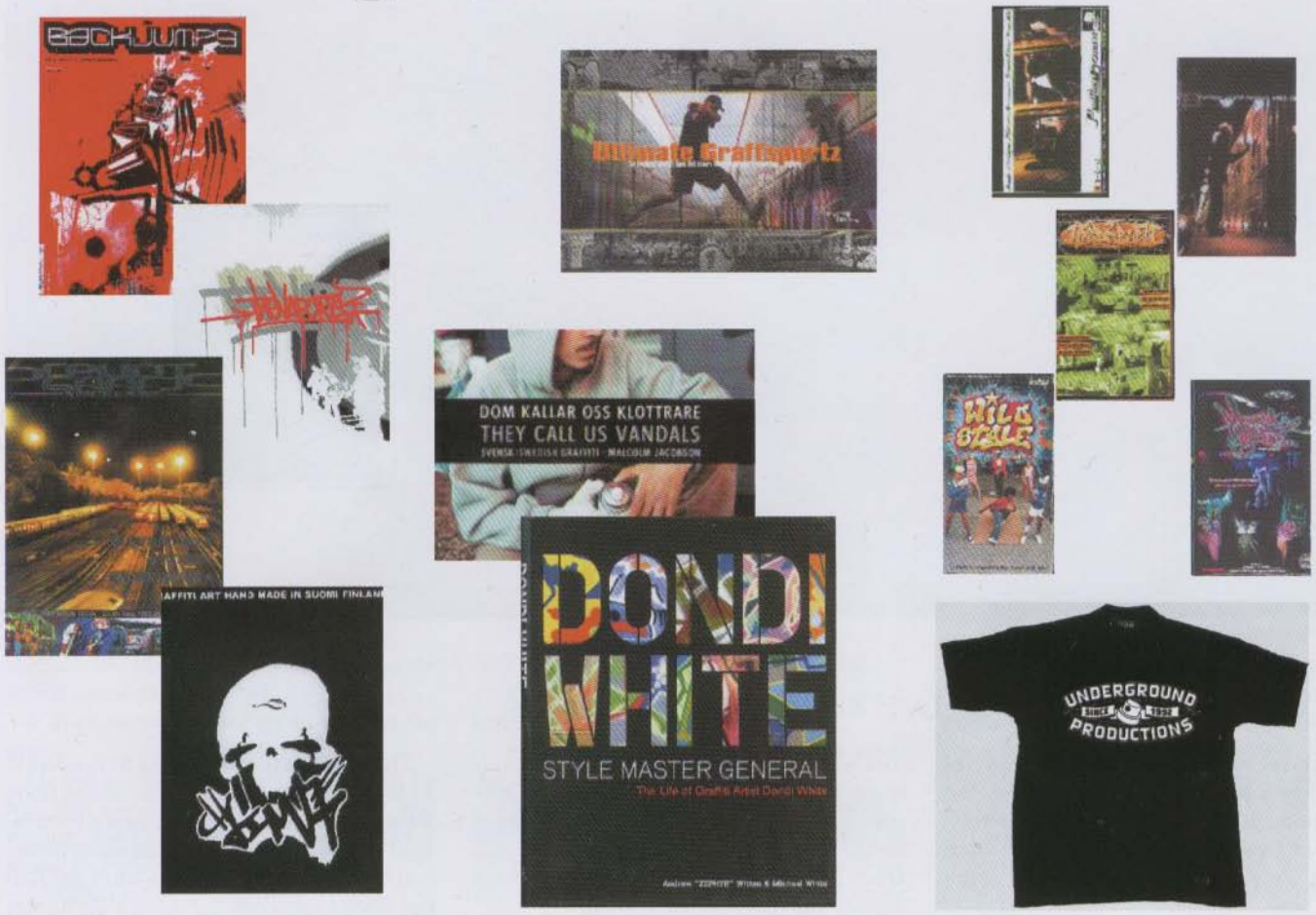
UNDERGROUND PRODUCTIONS 20 [2002]

carhartt®

Illustration by N.Ulgraffingraph.de

www.carhartt-europe.com • work in progress - exclusive distributor for europe © 2002 carhartt inc. USA ® carhartt and carhartt logo are registered trademarks of carhartt inc, Dearborn, MI 48121 U.S.A.

Tidningar, Böcker, Filmer...



www.underground-productions.se

postorderförsäljning | distribution

© Underground Productions
April 2002 – All rights reserved
Allt flerfaldigande förbjudet enligt lag

Legally responsible: Jacob Kimvall
Editorial Staff: Malin Fezehai, Jacob Kimvall, Tobias Barenthin Lindblad, Magnus, Malcolm Jacobson, Helena Brolin, Alex Boyea, Torkel, Erik (Skåne), Jonathan Josefsson, Malin Simonsson, Elias (Göteborg), Visual Vomit (Finland)
Text: Malcolm, Jacob, Tobias, Rasmus Hansen, Pärra Andreasson
Layout: Malin, Torkel, Magnus, Tobias
English translation: Martin Thomson
Photos: UP, Rasmus Hansen, and every one that supported us
Ads: Tobias Barenthin Lindblad
ISSN: 1401-8659
Printed by New Interlitho, Milano 2002

ADDRESS:

Underground Productions
Box 773
S-120 02 Årsta
Sweden

www.underground-productions.se
up@underground-productions.se

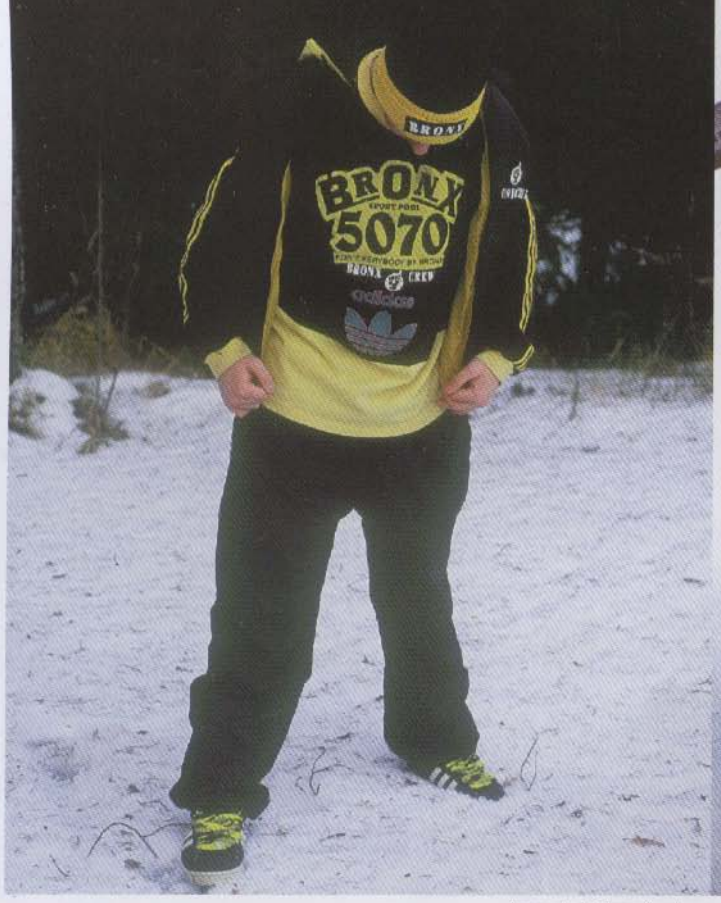
Cover Photo by Malcolm Jacobson. Sneakers in the wardrobe of Jesper (*page 4-7*), November 2001

Välkommen Nina!

How to get published

1. Send in your photos or texts to: UP, Box 773, 120 02 Årsta, Sweden
2. Make sure photos are of good quality.
3. If a piece is a part of a wall or train with several pieces - send in all pieces.
4. Don't send the same photos to other magazines.
5. Enclose the following info: text on the piece, who made the piece, when it was done, where it was done and anything other interesting about the piece.
6. If your photos don't get published - please try again!

Photos sent to us will be put into our photo archive and is considered as UP's property. We don't take any responsibility for material forwarded to us.



Jesper in his favorite dress

A mural for a farm outside of Östersund

"Graffiti – Both destructive and beautiful"

Oldschool hip-hop is thumping out of the stereo. Jesper, our host, handles the turntables and raps to the tunes between slugs of beer. Instead of talking to each other, we play video games and drink beer.

Jesper is 29, but his three-room apartment looks more like a teenager's bedroom, full of graffiti sketches, record covers, posters and newspaper cuttings. Only one room suggests how other 29-year old residents of Östersund live: in his dining room, the walls are adorned with children's drawings rather than graffiti pictures. Jesper's two children stay with him every other weekend. The shelves creak with magazines, videos, books, Kangol hats and caps.

– I've heard Dogge (from Swedish rap group Latin Kings) only has thirty caps. That's not so many, is it? says Jesper. Along one wall are shelves of records and some big boxes of marker pens. In the entrance hall are two beer crates containing legal pads filled with tags. Jesper is probably one of UP's most devoted readers, and during the ten-year history of the magazine, we have received several personal letters from him. Now we have gone to Östersund to find out who he is.

After the initial party at Jesper's, we are going to a dance. Jesper is sceptical, but his girlfriend Terese wants to go. Östersund is in the middle of Sweden, on the same latitude as Alaska, and in November the weather is bitter. Jesper does a few backspins before we slide out onto a path in the woods to go to the dance. Jesper is quiet and morose, having downed a few 7.2s (7.2% proof beer). We walk and speak to Terese, and when Jesper gets left behind, he loses his temper and destroys a bus shelter.

We are surprised by the different aspects of Jesper's character.

– Graffiti is both destructive and beautiful. That's why it'll never really be accepted. For me, it's like a vent: I'm both harmonious and explosive. Some people think I'm crazy when I tell them about things I've done. When I get angry, I am like a steam engine with no brakes. Some people think I'm crazy when I tell them about things I've done.

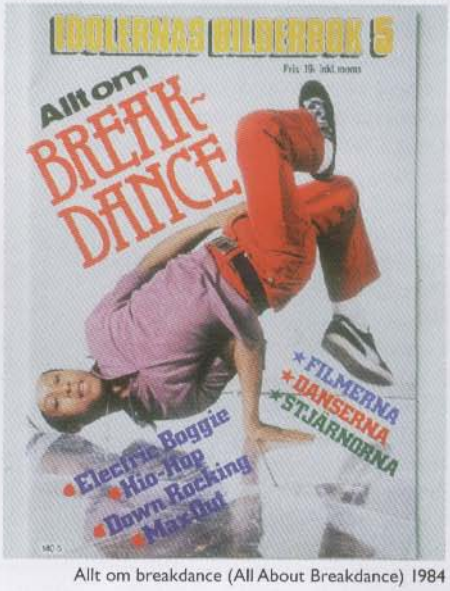
When Jesper was on a school trip in ninth grade, he smashed a room at the hostel. Following that, he had to attend a child psychiatrist. Later he was put in borstal.

A few years ago, Jesper was sentenced to a closed psychiatric unit. He doesn't think he received much help, but rather sees it as an assault. Now he attends therapy on a voluntary basis.

– If you haven't been given your space, graffiti can become a form of revenge against teacher, parents and the society that has let you down and failed to understand you. I'm not going to kiss ass and ask about legal jobs when they've spoiled things for me. I do my thing. If you haven't been allowed to be visible, to get your own space, you do it with graffiti.

Things are really happening at the dance. As we stand checking out the dance floor, we are repeatedly invited to dance by teenaged girls. Flattered, we try dancing to our best ability. Having failed to learn the foxtrot after a few goes, we stand a bit further away from the dance floor. We had expected a bunch of old ladies and gents, but the average age is about that of a hip-hop club in Stockholm, just with a broader span. This typically Swedish culture feels far more remote and exotic to us than breakdancing, popping and locking. Jesper, who has given his life to hip-hop and sews Bronx patches onto his clothes, is less than amused.

Jesper became fascinated with hip-hop in



Allt om breakdance (All About Breakdance) 1984

Sketches in Jesper's bedroom

the mid-80s. He started breakdancing at the youth centre around 1984.

– There were loads of crews battling, he says.

He did his first piece in 1985. Lately, he has also devoted himself to rapping and mixing. But that's not all. He has also collected everything to do with hip-hop.

– When I see a hip-hop thing, I think, 'I've got to have that'. The first thing was All About Breakdance, a 1984 magazine.

Before hip-hop, he collected firecrackers. Collecting has been a habit ever since, says Jesper, who sees similarities between his different collections:

– Having a bunch of markers and paint cans is a lot like having a collection of firecrackers: you look forward to blowing it all up. Now I blow it up with letters. I go out at night, and no teacher or boss tells me what to do. Writing graffiti is like baking yourself a cake, and letting others have a taste.

Jesper tells us about the difficulties in being an active writer in a small town.

– There's no understanding for ghetto culture here. Society doesn't want what you've got to communicate. They don't want to see the pictures, everything is supposed to be clinically clean.

Jesper often feels pressured into adapting to what his environment considers to be normal.

– People think that hip-hop is for 13 or 14-year-olds. But what about us, the ones who started it, then? It doesn't matter how old you get. An artist doesn't stop painting at a given age. Being an artist is a way to escape anguish. Creativity is born out of frustration.

At work or on other occasions when graffiti is discussed, Jesper often tries to get people to understand what it means to him:

– I see myself a bit like a yuppie, but instead of a briefcase I always carry sketches and photos in my backpack, which I take out and show.

Many people react to Jesper's collecting mania.

– The mother of my children says that I am married to graffiti and don't need a partner. I'm like a dipsomaniac, and have considered leaving hip-hop many times. But I feel naked without my hip-hop stuff.

Jesper is very conscious of his reasons for collecting.

– The gadget craze gives me a false sense of security. My father never understood what love is. He only ever talks about what he's bought or the work he's done on his

Jesper lights the light in the closet and stands aside for us. On the floor are sneakers. Many pairs. Only classic models with fat laces. (*See frontpage*) Some thirty track suits hang on hangers. However, Jesper would like a red-and-white Puma track suit, like the ones in Beat Street.

Some of Jesper's caps

The Danish graffiti stickers that influenced thousands of kids in the eighties

Part of Jesper's pencil collection

A slice of Jeper's living room

house. He never asks me how I am. Jesper's father is an alcoholic. This was a further cause for Jesper's appreciation of hip-hop, with Zulu Nation's anti-drug and anti-violence philosophy.

– The first time I saw a graffiti magazine I became ecstatic, he says. It was Hip Hop Connection.

The 1980s were a period almost entirely devoid of outside graffiti influence. You couldn't find graffiti magazines or videos, and mainly: there was no Internet.

Jesper was inspired by old films, posters and record sleeves:

– Rock Steady Crew, Grandmaster Flash's The Source, B-Boy records were the sort of thing you checked out. The came the 'Stockholmsnatt' Record, which was a stylistic inspiration.

Why did you latch onto hip-hop?

– I used to listen to Heavy Metal, but hip-hop wasn't just music, it was breakdancing and graffiti too, and hip-hop was cool! It was an exciting environment and the trains were fascinating. It was a contrast to Östersund.

In the summer of 1986, Razor and four other graffiti writers from Stockholm came to paint at a festival in Östersund. Jesper was fascinated and travelled far out of town to look at the tags the Stockholm crowd had made there.

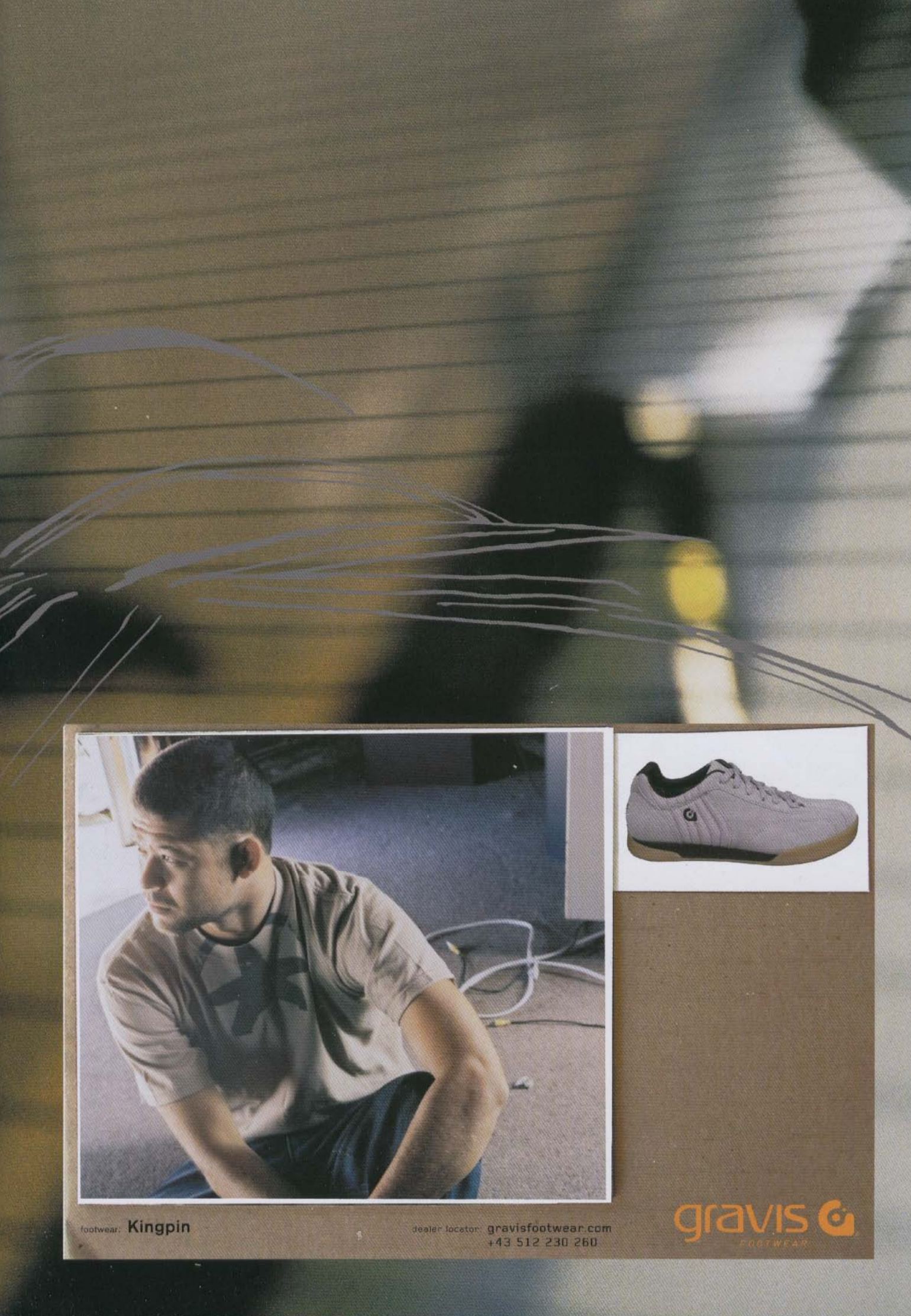
In April of 1987, Jesper went to Stockholm to stay with a relative who lived along the number 11 subway line. Ever since, he has travelled to Stockholm every year to check out graffiti.

– At first I guess I was mostly interested in tags. In Stockholm, it was especially cool when people tagged on the escalator going down, and in the subway. It made my head spin, there were so many tags everywhere.

Tobias Barenthin Lindblad
Malcolm Jacobson

A Shame-piece by Jesper

Tags at a subway station along line 11, April 1987 – Stockholm


footwear: Kingpin
dealer locator: gravisfootwear.com
+43 512 230 260
gravis
FOOTWEAR

Sken, Fatso – 2001

Pbar – 2001

Spyz – 2001

Hotel, Karma – Barcelona 2001

Pke, Nug, Akay – 2001

Lotus, Fuce, Dirte – 2001

Grey, Zeray – 2001

Assholes – 2001

Kcn – 2001

Ersy, Bruce – 2001

Porr – 2001

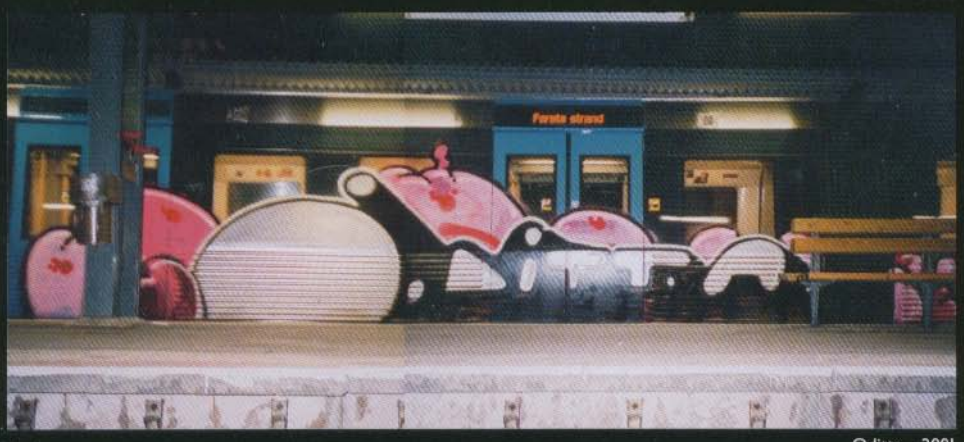
Kropp – 2001

Fher – 2001

Pms – 2001

Dao – 2002

Saht – 2001



Oditta – 2001

Clis – 2001

Isa, Atk, All, Misfos – 2001

Cazter – 2002

Winner – 2002

Ode – 2001

Sad – 2001

Wufc – 2001

Ape – 2001

Ode, Rilo, Oops – This is the result of a hangover afternoon 2001

Pack – 2001

Pms – 2001

Que, Wufc – 2001

Ovn – 2001

Pay Back – 2002

Reb – 2001

The exhibition Sthlm Underground was closed due to Stockholm City Council's graffiti policy. That started a new graffiti debate where many non-writers suddenly defended graffiti.

The Consequences of Art – An Interview with Björn Hårdstedt

"If you're turning this into a matter of saying that graffiti is art, you're on the wrong track."

Early one January morning.
My daughter Pippi has just had breakfast and got dressed. I'm ironing my yellow fatlaces. We're going to run to kindergarten. The phone rings.
"Pärra."
"You the artist?" someone asks.
"Well, artist, graffiti writer, vandal or hardened criminal, depends who's asking. Who are you?"
"This is Björn Hårdstedt."
"That's unbelievable," I exclaim. "I've wanted to talk to you for the last five years."
We interrupt the conversation.
As I said, Pippi has to be run to kindergarten. Björn wants me to stop using his and the Council Association's name when I speak to the media. Thoughts are whirling in my head. Five years ago I read about the Swedish Association of City Council's (SveKom) action plan against graffiti. It had a strong influence on me. I had never come across such a concentrated pack of lies about graffiti and graffiti writers. It was signed Björn Hårdstedt and Hans Silborn. Their campaign has resulted in videos, publications, lectures, etc., in an anti-graffiti campaign across the whole country that has seriously hurt graffiti and its practitioners, and has culminated in new law proposals and finally the closure of the Sthlm Underground exhibition. (At the time of writing, the graffiti film Commuter Madness II has been reported to the police by Kjell Hultman of the Transit Authority for showing graffiti on trains – and possibly a few pictures of himself!)
"Hi, it's Pärra again. So, do you have time?"
We chat about coffee, the Riddarfjärden area and ceramics, but soon come to the nitty gritty. I have so many questions for him, since I actually blame him for the current criminalisation of graffiti (the suppression of films and photographs, the closure of legal venues involving graffiti and even the myths about graffiti writers, that they are criminals and drug abusers.
"I didn't call you so that you could charge me. I don't work on that case any more."
"Then why did you call?" I ask.
"To have a dialogue," he replies.
"What's a dialogue to you?"
"You start from a mutual subject and then keep conversing."
I laugh.
"Björn, what do we have in common?"
(I am extremely surprised at his opening gambit, since Zero Tolerance, as SveKom came to call its action plan, declared its intent to shut out all proponents of graffiti from the debate. This means people who act in the graffiti question out of an aesthetic perspective. People with an academic education should especially be avoided in conversation.)
"You're a graffiti writer, right, and I am very interested in graffiti. I've been to look at Sthlm Underground and even bought a painting."
I don't believe him. Is he trying to suck up? I hate myself when I get suspicious. I ask him about the picture he bought. He doesn't want to talk about it. He tries to wriggle out of it.
"I mostly like *wildstyle*," he says. "It's the most creative."
"Are you lying to me? You bought a painting? To me you, just really sound like a graffiti hater", I answer.
He claims to love graffiti. Cool, big paintings, that is.
"I've got a picture of a Reason painting on the wall in my office," he says.
On the other hand, if someone were to tag his house, he'd take to his fists.
"Is this a method you could imagine society using? Like in Singapore? Public flogging?
There is a pause.
We laugh.
"Shall we get serious?" he asks.
He tells me he was a biker in the 80s. The problems occurred when bikers started driving through town too fast, some of them with the buffers out. It became a social problem. Since the bikers often drove at night, people couldn't sleep. People got tired of it and wanted to prohibit all motorcyclists. An image of threat against the whole motorbike culture appeared. Then the bikers got together in a national organisation, SMC, in which Björn became chairman. The club distanced itself from the joyriders.
"What I'm trying to say," he continues, "is

continues at page 46

VS.
CP
PEKING
ZOO
CP

ALIS
ALIS
WWW.ALIS.DK

NG: Tuna, Jas, Skar, characters by Ikaros, Gaine, Slak, Ribe, character by Ikaros

CP: Character by Maes, Mabe, Maes, Nuek, Ske, Malf

Playfulness vs. Experience

It was a cold and raw October day. The upstarts CP Crew (Cerebral parez) had challenged the 90s Norrland style kings NG (Norrlands Guld, also a popular brand of beer in Sweden). It was a meeting of two generations, two attitudes, two styles. I never thought I'd see NG as stylistic traditionalists, but that was the result in their meeting with CP.

Maes from CP says that NG was a crew that many of the CP guys looked up to for many years, but now it felt the time had come to challenge them.

So who won the battle?

NG chose to show CP Crew in wheelchairs, with the caption "It's not a disease, it's an accident of birth" and Ikaros painted a heavily-armed character aiming at CP's paintings.

CP's diss was somewhat more refined. An old man in typical NG shoes urinates into a home distillery machine, that fills cans of Norrlands Guld.

The disses also sum up the two paintings quite well: playfulness and arrogance versus experience and seriousness. Who the winner was is probably defined by whichever style you prefer.

Jacob Kimvall

Writers from CP-crew at work

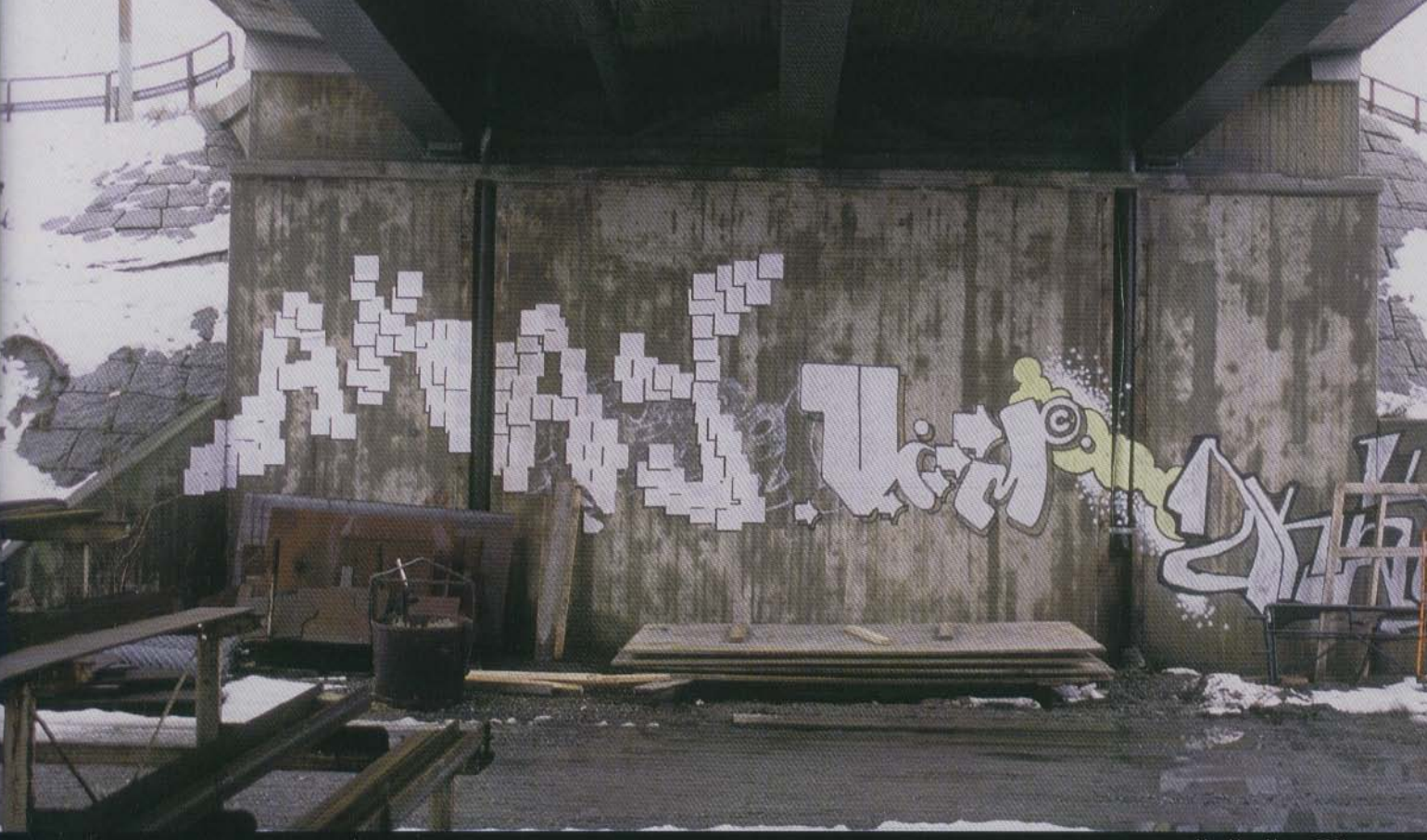
Star, Aod, Bcc, Thick – 2001

Usa=mördare (Usa=murderers) – 2001

Hotel – 2001

Oven – 2001

Sgk Crew – 2001



Akay, Vim, Akay – 2001

Ape, characters by Tiger – 2001

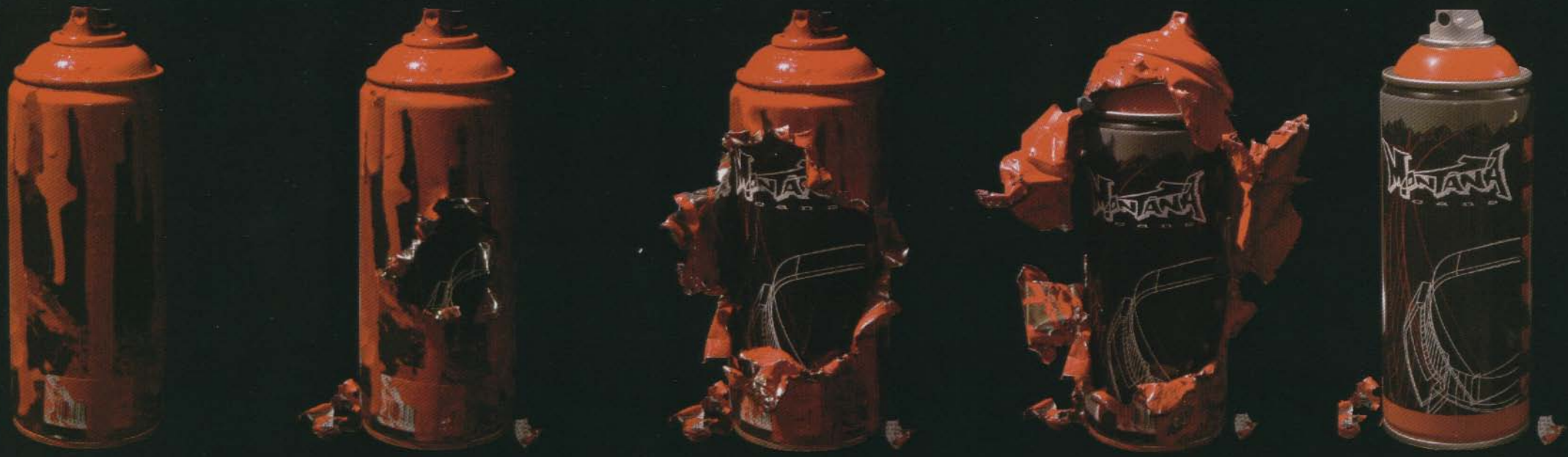
Iak – 2001

Reb, character by Pbar – 2001

Jeks, characters by Gouge – 2001

Skar, Wick, Trans, Show, Lotus – 2001

(r) e v o l u t i o n



10 **NEW** colours:

HIGHLIGHTS™

Östgötagatan 16, 11625 Stockholm, T-Medborgarplatsen, info@highlights.nu
Distribution: Tel.: 08-6436900, Fax: 08-6403001, distribution@highlights.nu

MONTANA cans

www.montana-cans.com

Yxa, Rets, Hook – 2001

Mhr – 2001

Oidor – 2001

Pig, Pms, Mhr, Ida – 2001

Skar – 2001

Fher – 2001

Yxa...

.., Atos, Mhr – 2001

Fls, Y2k – 2001

Mhr, Yxa, Ster – 2001

Mhr, 7dc – 2001

Nbc – 2001

Pig, Hook, Hood – 2001

Vsn, Trene – 2001

Flek, Elle – German commuter train in a Stockholm yard 2002

Foreign trains seen in Stockholm!

Since the end of 2001 Danish commuter trains are hired to Stockholm. This is because of a shortage in commuter trains. Soon German commuter trains will be taken into traffic as well. What's next; a New York subway train, or those Berlin subway cars that were taken by the Russians after world war 2?

Clash – Danish train in Stockholm 2001

Sad – 2001

Bccaod – 2001

Pms – 2001

Nasi, Yxa, Hook – 2001

One of the clearest examples of graffiti-like lettering. In front of a store – Varanasi 2001

India: More raw than high-tech

Although Indian culture is virtually uninfluenced by hip hop, let alone graffiti writing, Indian graphic and commercial design share many features with western graffiti.

Except for the trains, all the spots that are usually taken over by writers in the west, are hit by commercials in India; tracksides, bridges, walls or just some deserted shack in the middle of nowhere. Murals or billboards are virtually everywhere and most of them are painted by hand, sometimes by people standing on sketchy-looking scaffolds made of wooden sticks. The technique is highly developed and much of the lettering comes with whitelines and dropshades and stars or doodads in the background.

Aside from the piecelike lettering, you often see some excellent penmanship in the calligraphic styles of smaller signs. Most of them are written in the highly decorative Hindi script which is the main language of India. You can find a large variety of fonts and the innovation of the sign painters leaves nothing to be desired. The graphic style is often somewhat retro, and the fact that it is painted by hand gives it a very nice touch, rawer than the hi-tech glossy stuff that you see back home.

Spray cans are very hard to find, but in commercial painting, spray pistols are used for filling in the larger areas and for the fading effect. The little wall-writing to be seen that is not commercial is mostly political or some "I love you" type stuff.

Different alphabets are a great source of inspiration for writing; It's amazing to check out lettering in a totally different alphabet like Hindi. You look at these unintelligible letters only to find new letterforms growing out of them to create ideas for writing. Enjoy.

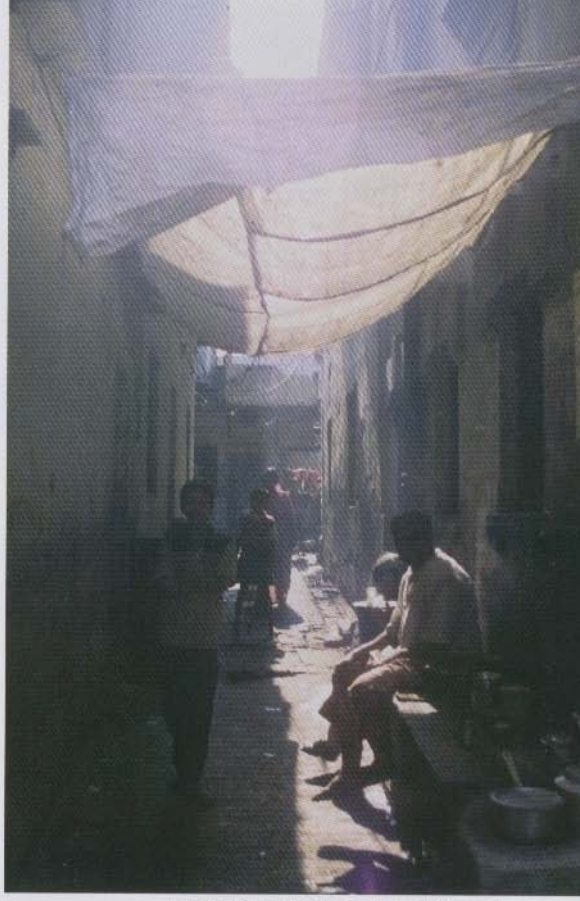
Rasmus Hansen

Varanasi 2001

The script on the blue sign is the southern language, Tamil – Varanasi 2001

Varanasi 2001

Varanasi 2001



A typical view of the backstreets of Varanasi

The monkey-god Hanuman – Varanasi 2001

Varanasi 2001

Poster – Varanasi 2001

Varanasi 2001

Commercial for the national cola, thumbs up – Rishikesh 2001

866130
1UP=0
58
ARMS
29
CREDIT 0

Cazter, Caey, Obee, characters by Ikaros – Stockholm 2001

Faze...

Ikaros – Umeå 2001

...Sabe – Copenhagen 2001

Reil, Zeray – Stockholm 2001

Blue, Karma – Nørrebro, Copenhagen 2001

Punk – 2001

Lups – 2001

Fire – 2001

Motown – "Studiegången" 2001

Ios – 2001

Acte – 2001

Scuba, Kil – 2001

Vns – 2001

Soul – 2001

Gothenburg has two legal walls. "Röda sten", as one of them is known, is situated in the harbour in a part of the city called "Majorna". The other wall, "Studiegången" is to be found in the east of Gothenburg, in "Björkekärra". Both of the walls fits about 20 pieces each.

Bingo, Alive – "Studiegången" 2001

Bingo, Winter, Sexton (16), Enia, characters by Punk – "Röda sten" 2001

Koollio by Kool, Ollio, background roof tops by Dds, Vns – 2001

Igs – 2001

Vns – 2001

Usa – 2001

Renk – 2001

Kk – 2001

Link – 2001

Otek, Jinx...

...Fire, Ollio – 2001

Oops, Oops, Oops – 2001

Oops, Soul – 2001

Ögat, X-man, Zoom – 2001

Hitek – 2001

X-man – 2001

Rois, Dexie – 2001

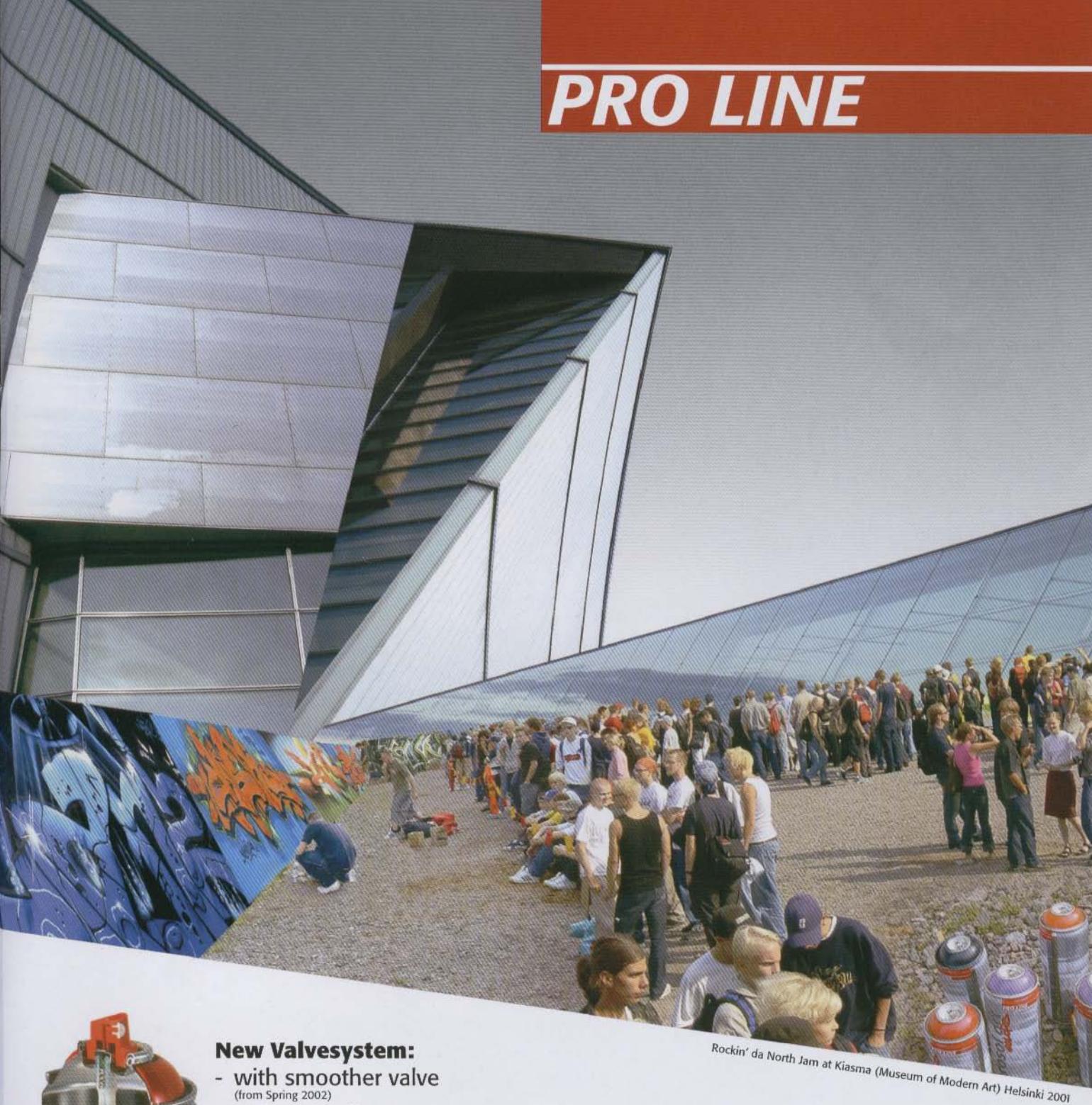
Quasii – 2001

Ollio – 2001

Slav – 2001

Ryan, Oban, characters by Deuz – 2001

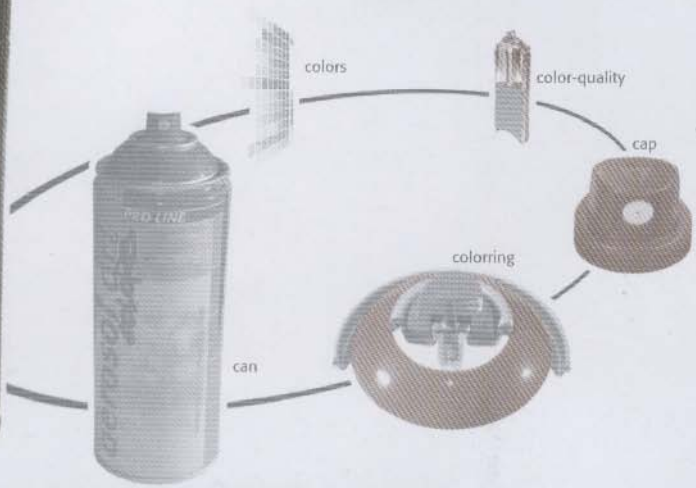
PRO LINE



Rockin' da North Jam at Kiasma (Museum of Modern Art) Helsinki 2001

New Valvesystem:

- with smoother valve
  (from Spring 2002)
- softer Handling
- spares the hand at writing



...be professional

aerosol art colors

HIGHLIGHTS™

Östgötagatan 16, 11625 Stockholm
T-Medborgarplatsen, info@highlights.nu
Distribution: Tel.: 08-6436900, Fax:
08-6403001, distribution@highlights.nu

www.aerosolartcolors.com

Ingo, Beq – Lund 2001

Mentor – 2001

Late – in Holland 2001

Ofec – 2001

Jiwl – 2001

Kc – Lund 2001

Ted – 2001

Heor – Helsingborg 2001

Ofec – 2001

Heor, Dino – Helsingborg Central Station at 14.15, 2001

Poer, Dille – Lund 2001

Thed – 2001

Cop – 2001

Sw – Helsingborg 2001

Hk, Beq – Lund 2001

Feff – 2001

Cairo – 2001

Mentor, Ofec, Min – 2001

Ner Crew – Malmö 2001

Mentor – Bridgetrain 2001

Ner – Pågatåg (commutertrain) 2001

Hools, Cairo – Ramlösa 2001

Hello, Bek, Leon – 2001

Leon – 2001

Sw, Off – Pågatåg, Lund 2001

Cairo, Mentor – Bridgetrain (Malmö-Copenhagen shuttle) 2001

Bek, Kc – Lund 2001

Fool – Lund2001

Ner – Interregio 2001

Näu – Påga train in the city of Västerås 2001

Wena – 2001

Leon – Påga train 2001

Besk, Hefa, Bluf, Hello, Thed – The train is standing in the Malmö buff 2001

Adam, Foe – Stockholm 2001

Stockholm 2001

Nuage – London subway 2001

Itso – Århus, Denmark 2001

Made – Stockholm 2001

Assholeism – Uppsala, Sweden 2001

Istedgade, Copenhagen 2001

Itso – Inter regio train, Copenhagen 2001

Street commucication

REPRESENTS SWEDEN WALLS

Fels – Gävle 2001

Frö – Gävle 2001

NG – Umeå 2001

Fiol – Gävle 2001

Record – Luleå 2001

Ape – Umeå 2001

Twig – Gävle 2001

Reil, Dekis – Östersund 2001

Boardhouse
www.boardhouse.org

LAIVURINKATU 41 00150 HELSINKI, FINLAND
tel. +358-9-687 464 47 fax +358-9-687 464 48

Rock Island, character by Ruskig, Allt kommer att ordna sig (Everything will be alright) by Maes – Malmö 2001

Rutin, Goner, Radon, Anse, Auto – Norrköping 2001

Plaster – Umeå 2001

Mask – 2001

Abstracts – Malmö 2001

Skar – Umeå 2001

Trans – Stockholm 2001

Done, Zero, Mesk – Malmö 2001

original
product
f r o m
barcelona

PHOTO: MIQUEL BADIA

www.montanacolors.com

DISTRIBUTION IN SWEDEN AND NORWAY: Homeboy - Gamla Brogatan 32, S-111 20 Stockholm, Sweden - Tel.:+46 8 411 42 78, Fax:+46 8 100 137 - www.homeboystore.com - homeboy@telia.com

Ians, Cake, Dekis, Izek, Moys – 2001

Roots – 2001

Kast – 2001

Pyc, Ringo – 2001

Dekis – 2001

Ringo, Tyse – 2001

Cake, Dekis – 2001

Fukzh...

...Ringo, Dekis, Ianz – 2001

Hioff – Norrköping Tram 2001

Dekis – 2001

Himan – 2001

Saht – 2001

Que – 2002

Lady, Käringtand – 2001

Reil – 2001

Side – 2001

Sex, Näu – 2001

Jvs, Dr Död, Burma – Regina train 2001

Saht, Dryk, Näu – 2001

Yep – 2001

Yep – 2001

Tms – 2001

Pheon – 2001

Misery – 2001

Raise – 2001

Exile – Seinjoki, 2001

Anmal – 2001

Fuse – 2002

Ricn – 2001

Sh, note the two-color effect

San Francisco

Similar to New York there seems to be a strong tradition of tagging in San Francisco. Classic local inventions like glassetching is carried on by writers like MQue and Percept. I even find the buffing pretty decorative...

Adams

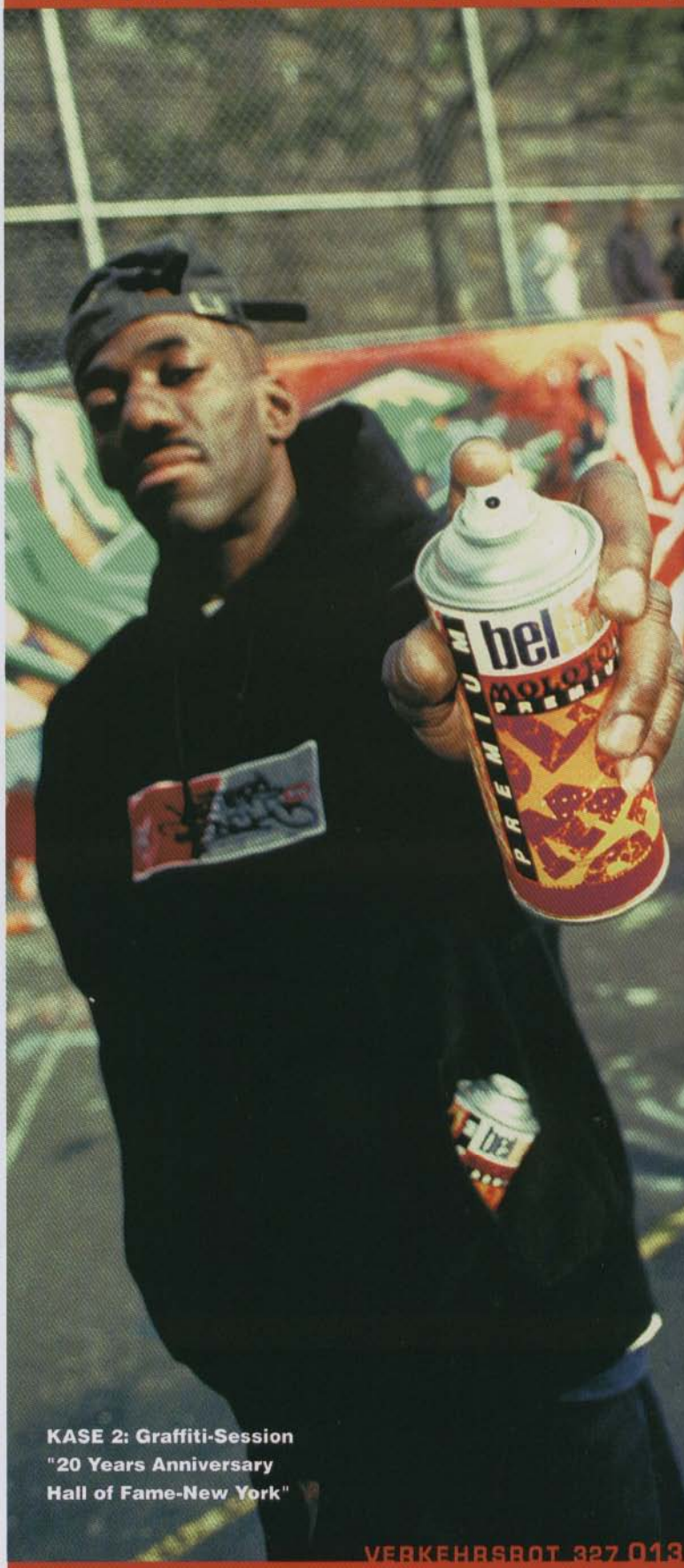
Matokie, Twister, Meta

Percept

Mq

Web, glass-etching pencil

PREMIUM
MOLOTOW ARTIST FAMILY



KASE 2: Graffiti-Session
"20 Years Anniversary
Hall of Fame-New York"

VERKEHRSROT 327 013

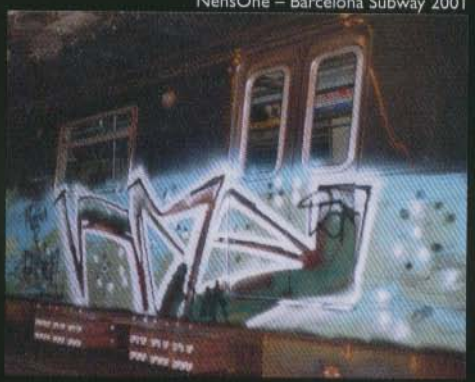
SKILLS Germany worldwide distribution
Friedrichstasse 23 D-77933 Lahr
fon (0049) 7821/25511fax (0049) 7821/956460
www.molotow.de

Inub – Boston Subway 2001

NehsOne – Barcelona Subway 2001

Ode...

...Mbay...



...Reb – New York Subway 2002

Raff – Berlin Subway 2001

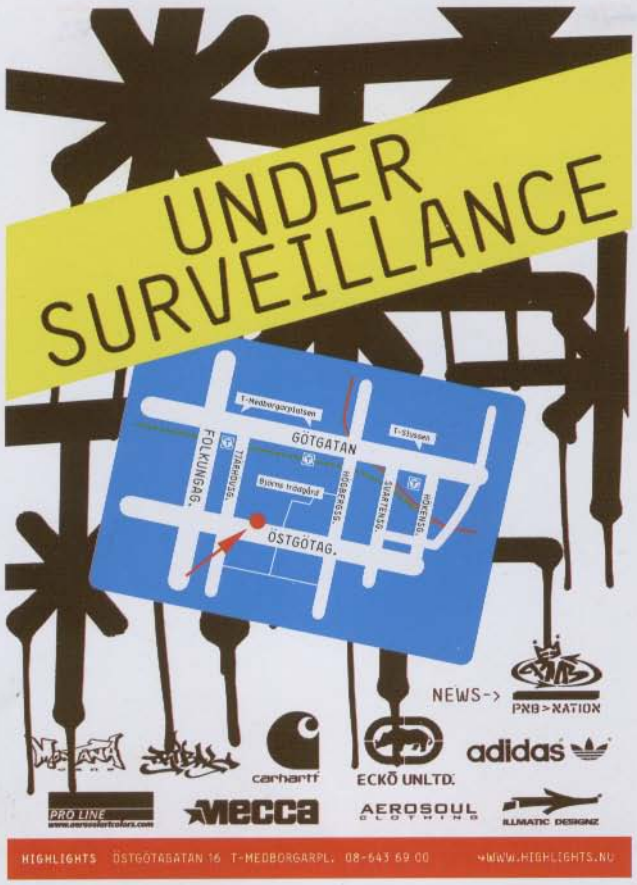
Rocky – Rio De Janeiro Subway 2001

Meat – Toronto Subway 2001

Nehs – Milan Subway 2001

Anek – Rome Subway 2001

How, Nosm – Lisboa Subway 2001



CHILD STORE

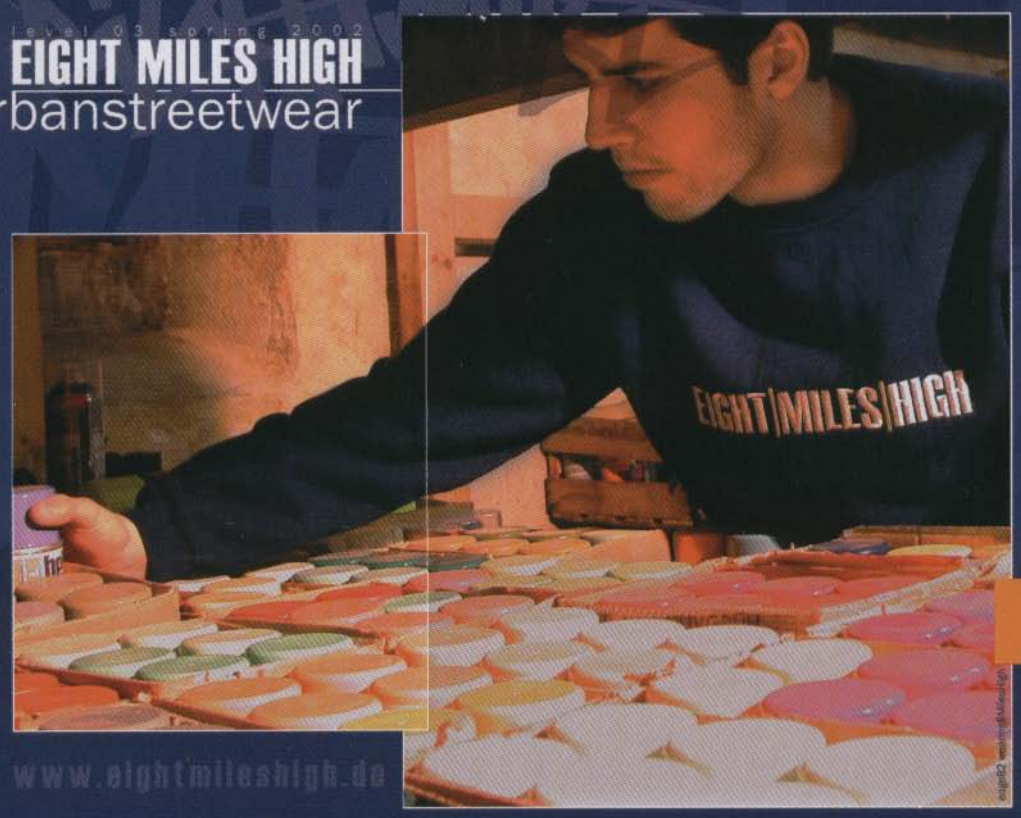
BMX
CANS
FILMER
MARKERS
CAPS

Child Store Berzeliigatan 5 (inne på Prostuff), 031-20 86 60

8MilesHigh

level 03 spring 2002

EIGHT MILES HIGH
urbanstreetwear



www.eightmileshigh.de

for information get in touch with PUBLIKAT KG, fon: +49(0)6021/218879, contact@eightmileshigh.de
netherlands, fon: 0243241982
switzerland, fon: 0616439420
spain, fon: 0917257759

Torch – Spain 2001

Nehs – Commuter train, France 2001

Duke – Spain 2001

Golpe – Commuter train, Barcelona 2001

Carlo, Slafe – Stuttgart commuter train 2001

Sw – Copenhagen 2001

Radio – Interregio, Denmark 2001

Rocky –Commuter train, Barcelona 2001

Chunk – Commuter train, Germany 2001

Daam, Marley, Bamm, Icht – Germany 2001

continuing from page 13

that graffiti writers have to keep a clean house. Get organised and distance themselves from the dregs."

I tell him that the Sthlm Underground Exhibition is exactly such an initiative. It is an association of 700 youths who organise events as an alternative to illegal writing. And what's more...

"I am the first person to take exception to the closure!" he exclaims.

I laugh, shake my head and remind him that over the past five years, SveKom and the Transit Authority have been determined to stop all legal graffiti activity. The action plan has also led to several councils adopting a Zero Tolerance policy, in which, amongst other things, legal walls are prohibited. He changes his tone.

"Okay! Okay! Shall we talk about the exhibition? Okay! Anna conned the fire department!" (Anna Ekholm was co-arranger of Sthlm Underground. The fire department offered the exhibition room.) "First, she stole a paper from the Modern Museum on which she wrote what she was going to use..."

"Hey!" I interrupt him. "Stole papers from the Modern Museum? She used to work there!"

He allows the interruption and calms down a bit.

"This is what I mean," I say. "Criminalisation. Opponents of graffiti always assume that there is some sort of criminal root. When you and Hans Silborn started your action plan, why didn't you meet up with graffiti writers and people with some insight into writing? Take Staffan Jacobson..."

"That crazy bastard." He laughs when he hears Jacobson's name.

"What do you mean?" I naturally ask. (Dr. Staffan Jacobson is one of those who studied graffiti and found that the methods suggested by SveKom and the Transit Authority, chemical technology, policing and lawmaking, have been tested everywhere else in the world but never entailed a decrease in illegal painting. Quite the reverse. Jacobson also found that legal alternatives have so far been the only thing to decrease illegal writing. Methods that SveKom and the Transit Authority stringently discard for some reason, even to the point of working against them.)

Björn tells me how it all started 7 or 8 years ago. He and Hans Silborn were given the task of trying to decrease illegal graffiti writing. One driving force behind this project was the Labour local politician in Västerås Åke Hillman; another was Kjell Hultman of the Transit Authority. Both are rabid opponents of graffiti in all its forms. The shit must be eradicated. Åke laid down the agenda and handled the contacts. Björn and Hans did as they were told and started their plan with the information Åke passed on to them. They did not feel they had to check the facts and figures he was providing them with. It was all collated, put on the Internet, printed in brochures, used for source material to propaganda films, etc. At one point they had 37 informants in the country propagating for Zero Tolerance.

"I mean," says Björn, "we became the mouthpiece to people out there in the country who might not be so damn verbal or good at expressing themselves but hate graffiti for destroying so much. We were in touch with property owners and others who wanted to see an end to all this misery." One day they read a debate article in a newspaper signed Staffan Jacobson.

"It was crazy. The guy was insane. He was using personal attacks."

Björn says that they responded to the charge, and the dispute was afoot and continued for some time.

"But," I ask, "Jacobson was quite devastated, just as I was when I first read your home page. Can't you understand if his reaction was strong?"

"Of course. But you don't need to use personal attacks. The graffiti debate was really hard back then. We were provoked, and wanted to be provocative. Today it's different."

"How so?"

"It seems as though the Swedish people, the cultural establishment, and several politicians want graffiti."

"My God! You mean that for all these years, Zero Tolerance is based on a personal conflict between you and Dr. Jacobson?"

"Well. It wasn't just me."

"Will SveKom stop criminalizing graffiti?"

"Well, we're not talking about total repression any more. Legal alternatives may be tested."

We talk for a long time, amongst other things about cultural Sweden, something for which Björn shows a certain disdain.

"It's damn easy to point at something and call it art without taking the consequences." He goes on to say that the European City of Culture year in Stockholm 1998 was a disaster. Especially in the case of information on laws and regulation.

"Do you have anything against culture as such?" I ask eventually.

"Well, maybe I'm just jealous. Maybe I'd rather be the one sitting on that couch..."

"Exactly," I interrupt, "That's where you should be instead of the cultural councillor Birgitta Rydell, who just sits there without the slightest idea what she's talking about. She just keeps repeating mindless phrases from what you and Hans Silborn put into print. *They are hardened criminals, they take drugs, they are hardened criminals*, like a parrot. Don't you feel a certain responsibility when she gets blamed for something you participated in formulating?"

Ikaros from the exhibition Sthlm Underground

"Well, as I say, it wasn't just me."

He tells me again that he no longer works on the case, but has still been in contact with Rydell to give her some support and arguments. "But only via e-mail."

I ask him again what he bought at Sthlm Underground, now that the atmosphere has lightened up.

"Just a lithograph," he answers, waveringly.

"Ikaros, then!" I smile. "How come?"

"I would rather have had a painting. The one with green eyes. It was nice. But it was sold."

"Tell me more. What did you like about the painting more than that it was nice? What seduced you?"

"Well... Something about the eyes."

"Do you know that those pictures represent men crying?"

"Hmm. They remind me of another artist I like. Charlie Christensen. The one with the ducks. That green in the eyes. Verging on the sick. Without stepping over the line. I also see influences from cubism, but in modern form: I like the angular, spiky pictorial language Ikaros uses. You could put it this way: *I can place myself in front of his painting and kind of see myself.*"

"Hey. I've been making notes while we talked. Is it okay if I write this down and publish it?"

"That's okay. Just remember I'm not talking for the Association of Councils but for myself, personally."

"Okay."

Of course I call Staffan Jacobson after the call and ask him what he has to say about Björn's statements and their row. He admits that they got into polemics at an early stage, and that the debate sometimes became quite absurd. He has a hard time answering how their conflict has affected the debate as a whole, resulting in the shutting out of graffiti proponents. "I can only talk about my research, which is well-supported. For Zero Tolerance people, that sort of thing just isn't important."

Pärra Andreasson

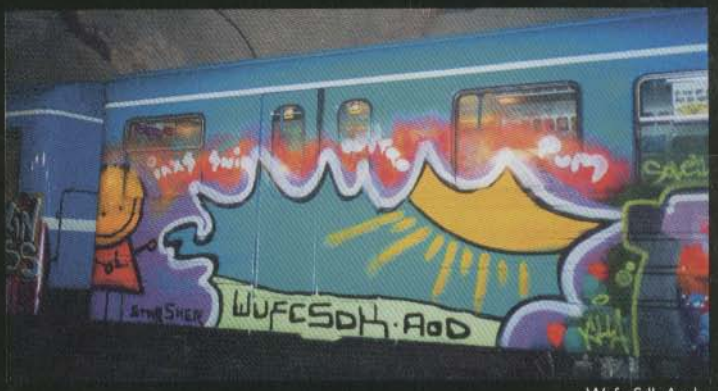
(C) by **BATES**, member of the Montana Writer Team, **for the NEW MONTANA GENERATION**

HIGHLIGHTS
Östgötagatan 16, 11625 Stockholm, T-Medborgarplatsen,
info@highlights.nuDistribution: Tel.: 08-6436900, Fax: 08-6403001,
distribution@highlights.nu
www.montana-cans.com

Casio...

...Cash – Stockholm 2001

Cazter – Stockholm 2001



Wufc, Sdk, Aod...

...Nick...

...Rilo – Stockholm 2001

Sad – Stockholm 2001

Oidor – Stockholm 2002

Break – Stockholm 2001

Ode, Reb – Stockholm 2002